

St Mary's, Inverness
The RC Diocese of Aberdeen: SC005122]
The Year of St Ignatius
20 MAY 2021 >31 JULY 2022

TWENTY-SIXTH REFLECTION

ROME & FIRST MASS

CONTEXT: In the Autobiography : *“ One day, a few miles before reaching Rome, he was at prayer in a church and experienced such a change in his soul and saw so clearly that God the Father placed with him with Christ his Son that he would not dare doubt it- that God the Father had placed him with his Son.”*

Ignatius himself confirmed the truth of Fr Lainez's account in a discussion with one of his secretaries, Fr Gonczalves de Camara. Lainez wrote : *“ He [Ignatius] told me that it had seemed to him that God the Father had imprinted these words in his heart, 'Ego ero vobis Romae propitius'—' I will be favourable to you in Rome'.....*



Ignatius' sense of dedication was stamped in his soul by an interior reassurance and confidence, that notwithstanding any opposition or persecution all would be well.

The La Storta experience was the fruit of his sense of 'irrevocable dedication', his experience of companionship in prayer, and his recollection of the many graces that he had been shown since the life-changing events at Pamplona, Loyola, Montserrat, Manresa, Barcelona, Alcala, Salamanca, Paris, Venice, and Vicenza.

La Storta becomes the gateway to Rome, and a new sense of Apostolic ministry with the Companions of Jesus.

ROME the Eternal City

Later that evening, as they entered Rome it was observed that the windows in the buildings were shut. Ignatius considered that this to be a sign of possible opposition, but the inner conviction, the impact of La Storta gave them a sense of reassurance.

Rome was not to be without its initial difficulties. There was an occasion when Ignatius warned the Companions that to avoid being embarrassed they should not meet alone with women. There were allegations, that Frs Xavier and Codure had been compromised by what two women had said. These were proven to be unfounded but thereafter in Rome the Companions would not meet women alone, always with another.

In Rome the Companions were housed by a nobleman, Quirino Garzoni in a small villa near the old Church of Trinita dei Monti. This afforded

them a view of St Peter's Basilica- the reconstruction of which was delayed by shortage of funds, the prevalence of malaria and a serious shortage of food. Rome was an unhealthy place, with many attendant dangers.

The two theologians, Fr Favre and Lainez were invited by Pope Paul III to teach in the Sapienza University, near to the Piazza Navona.



Ignatius was busy gathering people to whom he gave The Spiritual Exercises, deepening Faith and transforming lives.

Dr Ortiz who had encountered the Companions in Paris and Venice was now in Rome, and about whom Ignatius was wary. However both of them went on a forty-day pilgrimage to independent Priory of Santa Maria dell' Albaneta near the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino. Ignatius gave the Spiritual Exercises to Dr Ortiz.



This was a fruitful experience for him, and would have liked to have joined the Companions but his papal duties inhibited this. During time away at Monte Cassino Ignatius learned of the death of Diego Hoces, one of the Companions, at Padua while nursing victims of the plague. Ignatius tells of an experience concerning Hoces ; ***“ I saw him enter into heaven. I wept but I felt great comfort of spirit, and I beheld this so vividly that to deny it would be a downright lie”***.

Ignatius speaks quite openly about his spiritual insights, and the La Storta experience was so definitive, that as one of his associates wrote : ***“He was continually in communication with the Divine Persons and received from them various gifts... as if the Father had imparted his grace through the Son like a channel”***.

This constant sense of prayer, the practice of the Presence of God touched him imaginatively and enhanced his intuitive insights, and even within himself knowing something of the Divine compassion which the 'gift of tears' expressed.

Returning to Rome the Companions were confronted with further difficulties, when there was criticism and lying stories told about their missionary preaching. All the old calumnies were revived by those hostile to them, viz., that the Companions were secretly Lutherans, that they had been expelled from Spain, Paris and Venice because of their scandalous lives. This defamation had a severe effect on their public image, and many people turned away from them. The matter was not finally resolved until Pope Paul III instituted a judicial enquiry . On 18 Nov 1538 Ignatius was acquitted of all. Charges against him and the

Companions. This public declaration put an end to the persecuting calumny.

Now Ignatius and the Companions felt able to approach the Pope about their future. Clearly warfare, disease and political instability were all factors that prevented the Pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Holy Father said to them, ***“Why go to Jerusalem? Italy is a true Jerusalem if you desire to bring forth fruit in God’s Church”***

So it was that the Companions settled to work within Italy.

Ignatius had yet to say his first Mass, this being delayed until the Jerusalem pilgrimage. Now that the Companions were to begin their apostolate in Rome, Ignatius celebrated his first Mass at the Holy Manger Altar within the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore on Christmas Eve, beginning the Midnight Mass on 24 December 1538.





The Roman mission of the Companions was beginning as the Society of Jesus was coming into being as a formally recognised religious order.

Some thoughts to ponder as fellow Pilgrims :

- The practice of the sense of the Presence of God – being recollected in Christ, praying to the Father, and letting the Spirit direct and rule our hearts and minds.

- Frequently old enemies, including our personal sins and repeated failures to conform our lives to our prayers, come to try us
- Through all the difficulties, doubts and uncertainties we are resolute in the knowledge that 'all will be well'. There is a Blessed Assurance that comes from the costly simplicity of Faith, and the orientation of mind and heart, body and soul to Jesus as His companions – breaking bread together.
- Finding Jesus, wherever we see the afflicted, the vulnerable and those in any kind of need and holding them to God the Father and letting the Holy Spirit move us to share the Divine Compassion in a way that moves beyond tears to 'works of mercy'.
- Knowing that we all share in the Priesthood of Christ through our Baptism, and that at Holy Mass when the ministerial priest by word, prayer and sacramental act brings about the Miracle of Christ we are at the Manger- Christ is born again and again. Every Mass is an encounter with the Living Lord- we continue to pray for faithful priests and that seminarians will be formed in humility as faithful servants of Word and Sacraments.

Suscipe

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.

You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.

Prayer for Generosity

Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,
Teach me true generosity,
Teach me to serve you as you deserve,
To give without counting the cost,
To fight heedless of wounds,
To labour without seeking rest,
To sacrifice myself without thought of any reward,
Save the knowledge that I have done your will.

Amen.

We review our day and look forward with Jesus

Daily Examen : Looking with quiet sincerity and simplicity of heart at the day:

What comes to mind about today? Think and pray and see the strengths and weaknesses.

Five Daily R's (a daily examen)

R

Relish the moments that went well and all of the gifts you have today.

R

Request the Holy Spirit lead you through your review of the day.

R

Review your day.

R

Repent of any mistakes or failures.

R

Resolve, in concrete ways, to live tomorrow well.

Source:

Reimagining the Ignatian Examen: Fresh Ways to Pray From Your Day
by Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ



Scriptural Reflection :



I Corinthians 11. 23 – 29

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread,²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷ Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood

of the Lord. ²⁸ Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself

Scriptural Reflection :

- Conscious of St Paul's teaching about the Eucharist we reflect on our own offering of ourselves at Mass.
- We recall our First Holy Communion, subsequent Masses at important stages of our lives, and we connect with the living and the departed, bishops, priests, deacons and lay men and women with whom we have shared in the Sacrament.
- We pray for a greater sense of 'koinonia'- participation in the heart of the Mass, a sense of Communion in Christ, a fellowship Divine that is nothing less than the Body of Christ.

A thought for reflection and prayer :

A Period of Silence in which we pray with St Ignatius seeking understanding and insight, ever searching, ever finding, always willing.

"For those who love, nothing is too difficult, especially when it is done for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ."
Ignatius Loyola

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray



Praise God Always